REMARKS

Claims 15-16, 18, 20, 21 and 23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) on the grounds of obviousness from Wong in view of Forsberg et al. Wong was cited as disclosing a wick mounted to the cap and extending the liquid sample space of the interior sample chamber when the cap is placed on the container. Claims 15 and 20 recite "a container having an interior sample chamber with a liquid sample space," and "a wick mounted to said cap and extending into said liquid sample space of said interior sample chamber when said cap is placed on said container." As is illustrated in Fig. 5 of Wong, and as described at column 4, lines 28-40, the end portion 122 of each test strip 120 exits through an exit port 90, and the end portions 122 and the exit ports 90 are surrounded by the rim 92 on the bottom side 78 of the cap. In Wong, the end portions 122 of each test strip do not extend into the liquid sample space 130 of the interior sample chamber 38 when the cap is placed on the container. As is described in Wong at column 3 line 50, to column 4, line 44, the carrier 50 is provided to bring liquid sample up to the test strip end portions 122, because the test strip end portions do not extend into the liquid sample space of the interior sample chamber when the cap is placed on the container.

Forsberg et al. was cited as disclosing a wicking pad 128 in contact with a wick 120 and that is used to bridge the wick 120 to an assay strip. The Examiner argued that it would have been obvious to modify Wong to include the liquid conveying system of Forsberg et al. to facilitate liquid transport of a liquid sample to a test strip without flooding the test strip. Claim 15 recites "an annular bridging wick piece adjacent to and

in fluid communication with said wick and in immediate contact with said assay strip for conducting the liquid sample from said wick to said assay strip." Claim 20 similarly recites "an annular bridging wick piece adjacent to and in fluid communication with said wick and in immediate contact with said assay strips for conducting the liquid sample from said wick to said assay strips." Forsberg et al. discloses a first rectangular wicking pad 128 mounted between wicks 120 and test strips 124 at one end of the test strips, and a second rectangular wicking pad 130 mounted in contact with the other ends of the test strips. At column 13, lines 54-56, Forsberg et al. describes the second rectangular wicking pad as drawing liquid along the length of the test strips, and prevents flooding of the test strips. It is respectfully submitted that placement of the claimed annular bridging wick piece in contact with the end portions of the test strips of Wong or Forsberg et al. would not draw liquid along the length of test strips and prevent flooding of the test strips as suggested by the Examiner. Instead, the claimed annular bridging wick piece placed at the ends of the test strips in Wong or in Forsberg et al. would contact the test strips at portions of the test strips other than at the end portions of the test strips as well, and instead of drawing liquid along the test strips as in Forsberg et al., would deliver additional liquid sample to the test strips and interfere with the operation of the test strips. It is therefore respectfully submitted that it would not have been obvious from Forsberg et al. to place the claimed annular bridging wick piece in immediate contact with the wick of Wong, based upon the disclosure of a rectangular wicking pads 128 and 130 in Forsberg et al. It is respectfully submitted that Forsberg et al. does not teach, disclose or suggest an annular bridging wick piece adjacent to and in fluid communication with a

wick, and in immediate contact with an assay strip for conducting a liquid sample from the wick to the assay strip, as is claimed.

It is therefore respectfully submitted that Claims 15-16, 18, 20, 21 and 23 are novel and inventive over Wong and Forsberg et al., when taken either separately or in combination, and that the rejection of Claims 15-16, 18, 20, 21 and 23 on the grounds of obviousness from Wong in view of Forsberg et al. should be withdrawn.

In light of the foregoing remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance, and an early favorable action in this regard is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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